

342 which make up the *efu*. The Nupe house consists of a number of huts,
 361 mostly round, built of clay and thatched with grass, which are sur-
 rounded by a high mud wall. The wall opens upon the path or open
 space in front of the house in the *katamba*, a hut more spacious than the
 rest, with big doors which make the *katamba* a gateway or entrance-hall
 of the compound. Inside the house are smaller partitions and a number
 of smaller *katamba*, all invisible from outside. You only see the tops of
 the grass roofs protruding from behind the compound wall. Sometimes
 the house of a chief is built in a different, more imposing style with a
 large square or semicircular *katamba* which has a high gabled roof and
 windows let into the walls. Often huts or entrance-halls are decorated
 [631] with ornaments worked in relief into the clay. Some houses are more
 beautifully decorated than others—a sign both of difference in prosperity
 and in ambition or aesthetic leanings. There are the signs of occupa-
 tional specialization: one or two blacksmiths' furnaces; a house decorated
 with crude plastics in relief of animals, or with a pair of horns surmount-
 ing the roof—a hunter's place; a platform of dyeing pits in one corner of
 the village, and perhaps the half-open sheds of the weavers. To-day one
 346 small mosque at least is found in every village of Nupe. Pagan sacred
 778 shrines or sacrifice places are mostly hidden inside the houses; only in
 361 the riverain villages did I find a sacred shrine placed in the open, in the
 middle of the village. The sacred groves where the annual sacrifices are
 performed are always some distance away from the village, hidden in the
 thin bush and brushwood which surround the village. Most villages are
 361 situated near a watercourse, be it only a little stream or brook. From
 [312] here the women fetch the water, and here you may see them at all hours
 of the day washing dishes and calabashes or laundering their clothes.
 There are also wells in most of the villages, well-dug deep wells—the
 Nupe are excellent well-builders—with a strong timber framework and
 a solid, clean platform round the mouth of the shaft; standing on the
 platform, the women draw water in buckets or earthenware pots tied to
 long ropes of native hemp. The big, round roasting-ovens of clay which
 look like huge red eggs scattered on the outside of the village, and in the
 bigger places the square of open booths which forms the market, com-
 plete the picture of the Nupe village. Once or twice a week this square
 [354] is overflowing with people, men and women of all ages: they buy and
 347 sell, they listen or dance to the music of drummers and flute-players,
 they have their heads shaved, they talk, chat, cry out their wares. They
 are a mixed crowd, and the nearer the village is to the main roads of the
 country, the more mixed it is: people from the village, peasants from the
tunga near-by, traders from Bida, travellers and occasional visitors from
 places and countries far away.

621 The market gathering is not the village community. Yet the boundary
 571 of what we have called the area of common life is, of necessity, fluid. It
 is redrafted and reset with every new bond of contact and every new
 channel of communication. But we may say this: the village and its
 dependencies form the core of this area of common life. Between them
 takes place the intensive life of the community, of regular and habitual
 co-operation in all spheres of life. Within this area marriages are arranged,